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UNCLAS DJIBOUTI 001096

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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: POST REACHES OUT WITH RAMADAN  
ACTIVITIES

1. (U) SUMMARY: Embassy Djibouti sponsored a football tournament for youth, a donation to needy families and four Iftaars (fast breakings) in honor of the Islamic Holy Month of Ramadan. PD also distributed President Bush's Ramadan messages to media outlets and various government officials who subscribe to Washington File.  
END SUMMARY

2. (U) The Embassy's Ramadan programming kicked-off with a soccer tournament for youth in conjunction with Hadj Dideh, a neighborhood youth center. These Ramadan tournaments are a local tradition much beloved by the children in the local neighborhoods. Public Diplomacy provided t-shirts (with the Embassy logo on the front and Tournoi de Ramadan 2005 on the back) and beverages and prizes for about 225 kids in three age divisions (boys and girls aged 8-18). The DCM and PD officer attended the opening and were warmly received by both players and neighborhood leaders. The Ambassador will give tournament awards the last week of November.

3. (U) In addition, the Embassy sponsored 150 needy families for Ramadan in conjunction with Al Biri, a Muslim social service organization. Post provided staples for the month of Ramadan through a grant to Al Biri. Cost of the grant was about \$10,000 and goods included rice, flour, oil, canned milk, dates and powdered juice for the entire month. On October 16 the Ambassador attended a ceremony at Al Biri and addressed some of the benefiting families. The event was well-covered by both local television and print media, including the Ambassador's address, which was given in Arabic and translated into Somali. See para 5 for the English text.

4. (U) The Ambassador hosted three Iftaars, one for male Djiboutian Ministers, Arab ambassadors, male business people and military. A second was for influential women. A third is for Islamic Imams, male judges and ministers and the Executive Secretary of IGAD. The Public Diplomacy Officer hosted a mixed-

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gender Iftaar for International Visitors alumni. They served as an excellent opportunity to bring contacts together and to introduce influential community members to some of the new staff at Embassy Djibouti. Iftaar attendees expressed their gratitude for the consideration the Embassy demonstrated by organizing events for Ramadan and some have reciprocated with similar invitations for Embassy staff.

5. (U) Text of Ambassador's speech at Al Biri on Sunday, October 16, 2005 in honor of Ramadan donations.  
Start Text:

From a very young age Americans are taught the importance of sharing their blessings with those less fortunate and that service to others is the cornerstone of a strong community and a fulfilling life. These values are also reflected in the Islamic observance of Ramadan, and we show our respect for and dedication to them by being here today.

Throughout our history, America has benefited from the success and contributions of people of many different faiths. Last week President Bush sent greetings to all those observing Ramadan. In his message, he noted the many ways American citizens of Muslim faith have helped make the United States a stronger, more hopeful place through their faith, generosity and compassion. We are proud that all Americans, no matter their race, religion or ethnicity, can share these values.

At the American Embassy we saw these values reflected in Al Biri's dedication to those in Djibouti who most need help. I'd like to take this opportunity to say that we value your efforts. We'd also like to thank you for helping us identify and assist those in need. This ceremony today is a symbol of what two groups with the common goal of community service can accomplish together. Thank you for your cooperation. Thank you for your dedication. Thank you for your compassion for others. Ramadan karim.

End text.

RADSDALE